



Information for Social Change

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Information for Social Change Number 35

Summer 2015

**Issue Editors:
Martyn Lowe & Paul Catherall**

Information for Social Change is an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, *Information for Social Change* freely available at <http://www.libr.org/isc>

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The ways by which information is controlled and mediated has a serious influence on the ways people think, how they communicate, what they believe is the "real world", what the limits of the permissible are. This applies equally to information that comes through the channels of the mass media, through our bookshops or through our libraries.

But we want to go further than that, documenting also the alternatives to this control, the radical and progressive channels by which truly unfettered, unmediated ideas may circulate. And further still: to encourage information workers to come together, to share ideas, to foster these alternatives – whether we are publishers, librarians, booksellers, communication workers or distributors. Whoever you are, if you are in sympathy with us, join us.

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Editorial and Contributors

Welcome to this general issue of Information for Social Change, providing a broad range of papers on topics as diverse as the UK media industry, equality, happiness and wellbeing, UK data protection procedures, issues relating to undercover policing and corporate spying, reflections on news sources in the UK, a review of the contemporary parliamentary UK Labour Party leadership contest and various other original items, such as a review of VPN software for accessing information in locations impacted by Internet infrastructure issues or restrictions and an illustrated poem.

Paul Catherall

Contributors of this issue include:

Andrew Hudson - is Assistant Librarian (Special Resources) at Canterbury Christ Church University and took an M.A. in Information and Library Management at University of Northumbria at Newcastle and took bachelors and Masters Degrees at University of Oxford.

John Pateman - has worked in public libraries for over three decades in six local authorities. John's career in public libraries began in 1978 and has spanned over 30 years. John has written many articles on aspects of social exclusion (especially social class), community development, internationalism and libraries in Cuba. He was a member of the government working group which produced Libraries for all: social inclusion in public libraries (1999) and of the research team which produced Open to All' The Public Library and Social Exclusion (2000).

Martyn Lowe – Martyn has been involved in many activist groups focused around the peace and ecology movements, including Greenpeace (London), & WRI (War Resisters International). He has recently been active in groups such as Kick Nuclear, Nuclear Trains Action Group, and recently formed the “Close Capenhurst” campaign. Martyn is an editorial board member of Information for Social Change. You can see Martyn's blog at <http://www.theproject.me.uk/>

Martin Ralph – A former educator having worked across several education sectors, Martin has been a Trades Union activist for many years and is currently an officer within the Liverpool branch of the TUC (Trades Union Congress), Martin is also a branch committee member of the UCU (University and College Union) at University of Liverpool and is an activist within local movements such as Liverpool Against the Cuts (LATC). Martin is a member of the International Socialist League. Martin also maintains strong regional and international links within the Trades Union movement and has participated in overseas anti-austerity campaigns in France, Brazil and other countries in recent years.

Paul Catherall – Paul graduated with a BA(Hons) in English Literature and Media Studies from the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education and a MA(Dist) in Library and Information Management at John Moores University, Liverpool, he has worked in a number of educational sectors including FE and HE, within Libraries, IT and teaching roles. Paul was active in Career Development Group, Wales (CILIP group) 2002-2009 and has been a Trades Union branch committee member with UNISON and UCU (University and College Union). Paul currently works at University of Liverpool as a librarian for online degrees and is undertaking a PhD in the field of E-Learning, Paul's book *Delivering E-Learning* is available from Woodhouse Publishing. Paul is an editorial board member of ISC.

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Remembering Babylon

Andrew Hudson

The late Sir Arthur C. Clarke wrote numerous science fiction stories including one called *I Remember Babylon*¹ in which a television producer who was a victim of McCarthyism outlines how he intends to gain his revenge and subvert the world by broadcasting Chinese propaganda from satellites. The broadcasts would include sex and violence to attract viewers. A later rather more absurd version of the theme came with the BBC Dr Who series when the renegade Time Lord 'the Master' used a satellite broadcasting network called Archangel to win an election under the assumed name of Harold Saxon - a prophecy that may yet be fulfilled with capitalist propaganda being beamed from space via satellite television channels such as Sky.

In the recent British general election the largely Tory press hyped up scaremongering stories about the unity of the United Kingdom being threatened by the extraordinary growth of the slightly left-of-centre Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) which looked like it might have held the balance of power. The SNP were presented as a threat that could hold any Labour government to ransom and repeated the possibility of an SNP coalition despite the leaders of both parties emphatically ruling one out. It was as if John Maclean was coming. There was also a vile personal attack on the then Labour leader Ed Milliband - with Ed Milliband ate my hamster type stories. How much influence the newspapers actually had is open to

debate - what is certain is that this influence is declining as fewer and fewer people read newspapers.

The bulk of British newspapers however promote right wing ideology and many are owned by tax exiles and non-doms (those not resident in the UK) who nevertheless play the Patriot game, denounce the left as being unpatriotic and demonise benefit claimants, presenting the old idea of an undeserving poor but say little about the existence of an undeserving rich.

Fortunately there are alternative sources of news in the form of the BBC and the terrestrial regulated ITV companies which are required to provide balanced coverage.

Owen Jones regards the BBC as being the mouthpiece of the establishment², however the Daily Mail and the Murdoch press regard the BBC as promoting left wing propaganda; Nigel Farage the leader of the UK Independence Party launched a tirade against the BBC that would qualify him for membership of the John Birch Society. In his book Jones describes a term invented by the American right known as the 'Overton window' which is the area containing what is seen to be politically possible and acceptable at any one time; he also describes how what he terms 'outriders' can shift these windows by introducing ideas on the fringes repeating them until the windows starts to move³. The Tory press is trying to shift the window even further to the right and to eliminate competition.

The main form of bias I have noted in the BBC is a tendency to not question the employers side in industrial disputes as much as they should, it is however a slight bias. One example occurred during the so-called British Jobs for British workers dispute in 2008 in Lincolnshire; Peter Mandelson one of the main architects of new Labour and a former cabinet minister and EU commissioner made a statement that Total had

said workers bussed in from Italy were not being paid less. The person interviewing failed to ask Mandelson if he accepted Total's statement at face value. Media coverage also largely failed to point out that a lot of the strikers were East Europeans and they were not a bunch of racists.

Cameron's appointment of John Whittingdale as culture secretary suggests that some kind of assault on the BBC is likely possibly when the renewal of the charter takes place in 2017 and over the license fee.

In the current climate it is necessary to defend the BBC. Attacking the public service broadcasting needs to be seen in context with new proposals to limit trade union political campaign funds and calls for English votes for English laws all of which will strengthen the tenuous hold of the Tories who were elected on only 37% of the votes cast.

In the United Kingdom and the Crown Dependencies any household watching or recording live television transmissions as they are being broadcast (terrestrial, satellite, cable, or internet) is required to hold a television licence. The TV licence was introduced in 1946 following the resumption of television broadcasting. A licence introduced in 1923 also existed for radio receivers however this was included in the TV licence fee for people owning televisions. In 1971 the radio licence was abolished. The TV licence fee is a tax collected by the BBC and primarily used to fund the radio, television and online services of the BBC itself.

This type of tax (i.e. one raised for a particular defined purpose) is known as a form of hypothecated taxation that is used to fund the publically owned British Broadcasting Corporation which was the first public service broadcaster in the UK. The licence fee allows the BBC's UK services to remain free of advertisements and independent of shareholder and political interest.

With the launch of the first commercial broadcaster ITV in 1955, the government required that the local franchises fulfilled a similar obligation, mandating a certain level of local news coverage, arts and religious programming - in return for the right to broadcast although commercial broadcasters are funded by advertising. The communications regulator Ofcom requires that certain television and radio broadcasters fulfil certain requirements as part of their license to broadcast. All of the BBC television and radio stations have a public service remit, including those that broadcast digitally.

The alternatives to the licence fee include funding the BBC from general taxation, use of advertising revenue or a switch to a subscription system like Sky. All of these alternatives are likely to threaten the independence of the BBC. Funding the BBC from general taxation may make it more susceptible to government interference, although general taxation is less regressive than the flat rate licence fee; the current UK government has however gone in the opposite direction - shifting the costs of the world service from the Foreign Office to the licence fee.

I do not oppose decriminalising non payment of the TV license as the enforcement process leaves a lot to be desired, especially the harassment towards people who do not have a television whom they regard as guilty until presumed innocent and are bombarded with intimidating letters prior to visiting them.

The TV licensing system is currently managed by Capita. Until recently, dealers were required to provide details of anyone buying or renting receiving equipment but this was lifted in 2013. The licensing authority has a database of potentially licensable properties and initially sends out letters to these addresses asking the recipient to reply either by letter, phone or using an on line form; they do not enclose a prepaid envelope or provide an 0800 free phone number which means that any recipient

effectively has to pay to reply. It may be a small sum of money but it is the licensing authority that is asking for the information. The problem lies in the reluctance of the licensing authorities to believe anyone who doesn't own a television, so the authorities send letters warning of prosecution and threatening visits to confirm there is no television present.

One type of standard letter includes the phrase: "OFFICIAL WARNING: WE HAVE OPENED AN INVESTIGATION" whilst this shouldn't necessarily worry someone with nothing to hide, another standard letter states: 'Dear Sir/Madam, you have not responded to our previous letters. We want to ensure you have the information you may need before a hearing is set at your local court' - giving the impression that prosecution is likely and filling the recipient with the uncertainty that they may be required to prove their innocence.

The actual visits have in my experience been a lot more polite with the officers being largely courteous and satisfied that no TV was present and surprised at my cooperation. One matter of concern is that enforcement officers receive a bonus for a prosecution statement obtained from a household. Could someone be prosecuted on false evidence? Enforcement officers can ultimately obtain a search warrant usually only after a detector device has obtained sufficient evidence.

The growth of TV from the internet and mobile phones has added a new dimension to the debate in that TV reception is no longer restricted to TV sets. The internet and mobile phones are not exempt from the regulations but reception from them may be difficult to detect resulting in the licensing authorities pressing to require the owners of mobile phones and televisions to pay the licence fee, again deeming people to be guilty until proven innocent.

The opponents of the licence fee are largely on the right, the Murdoch Press and outraged Jeremy Clarkson fans but not exclusively from the right.

The BBC is far from perfect, some of the pay offs of highly paid managers have been outrageous, however the institution is worth defending because Fox television type news coverage will shift the 'Overton window' even further to the right and we need to shift it in the opposite direction. Therefore we need to prepare to defend public service broadcasting and ensure that brainwashing by satellite TV remains within the realms of fiction.

1. Clarke, Arthur C. I remember Babylon, 1961.
2. Jones, Owen. The Establishment and how they get away with it, Allen and Unwin, 2014, p118.
3. Jones, Owen. The Establishment and how they get away with it, Allen and Unwin, 2014, p44-5.

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Making a UK Data Protection and Subject Access Request

Paul Catherall

I recently had the occasion to be required to request personal data held on a family member from a Public Sector organisation. I had never before used the services of the Office of the Information Commissioner (UK), however, this route presented itself as a means to obtain the personal data being held on the family member mentioned.

One of the initial decisions to be made was the exact legal framework to employ to obtain the data, I was familiar with the concept of Freedom of Information and associated regulations in terms of access to publicly held information such as the procedures, financial or other permissible public data held within a public sector (UK) body, but was less familiar with Data Protection regulations.

I quickly discovered that the Data Protection regulations related specifically to issues relating to personal data held by any organisation or business (whilst a Freedom of Information request relates solely to public information held with public sector organisations).

The procedure for obtaining personal data should begin with a "Subject Access Request" (SAR) to the required organisation or business in writing, and a standard template letter can be obtained from the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) Web site (see links below).

In the event this 'SAR' request is not fulfilled after writing to the organisation, you can then resort to an application to the ICO using their procedures or step by step guide (see below).

This application is very easy to accomplish and you are issued a client registration number and case worker (usually within 10 days), the ICO also advise that you should expect a response – i.e. some form of initial feedback or confirmation of your case within 30 days.

Overall, I found the process of making a Subject Access request straightforward, the links below provide access to the ICO forms and Web site. The step-by-step procedure provided was particularly helpful. I also found the ICO staff very helpful, providing a telephone support line or communication by email.

Links:

Office of the UK Information Commissioner:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Reporting a Concern:

<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Step by Step procedure:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>

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The 2015 Labour Leadership, Libraries and Education

Paul Catherall

It is late summer 2015 and the UK Labour Party is currently experiencing a leadership election, the candidates include two former Labour ministerial office holders in the previous Labour administrations(s) 1997-2010: Yvette Cooper and Andy Burnham. Another contender, Liz Kendall is a relatively new MP, serving since 2010.

Yet another contender, Jeremy Corbyn is a backbencher and left-wing MP, a former associate of Tony Benn, a veteran Trades Unionist (including a former full time official within the National Union of Public Employees) and long time member of the Socialist Campaign Group within the Westminster Parliamentary Party.

During Labour administrations from 1997 until 2010, the two former ministerial contenders, Cooper and Burnham played key roles in the Blair and Brown administrations, and are widely seen as supporters of that era in the Labour Party known as "New Labour", a development of the Labour Party initiated by politicians such as Neil Kinnock, Peter Mandelson and Anthony Crosland. The New Labour approach focused around the fusion of social justice and the capitalist economic model, iconically seeing the removal of Clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution which had previously committed the party to "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" (Adams, 1998).

In the New Labour years, we had seen several major initiatives which dramatically altered the course of UK society and the traditional social democratic stance of the Labour Party. These developments included:

- The introduction of the Public Private Finance (PFI) initiative, contracting corporate organisations to run public services such as NHS services for fixed periods (Broadbent & Laughlin 2005).
- The introduction of the National Minimum Wage, at the time of writing £6.50 for over 21s and £5.15 for individuals aged 18-20.
- The introduction of workfare schemes, usually operated by commercial contractors to place job-seekers with various participating employers, essentially working in lieu of paid income for the jobseekers allowance (i.e. paid significantly less than the minimum wage), see 'Comment on Workfare', ISC 33 <http://libr.org/isc/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Full-ISC-33.pdf>
- The introduction of Higher Education tuition fees, rising to £3000 by 2010 (also see ISC 33 above, 'The Impact of "Austerity" and Deregulation on Young People's Services in the UK').
- The mass closure and outsourcing of Public Libraries (McMenemy, 2009) and Post Office outlets (Langford, & Higgs, 2010).
- The transformation of the UK National Health Service under the reformed Trust system, effectively breaking the NHS into diverse competing providers with a range of local arrangements, procedures and policies (Pollock, 2004).
- The introduction of academy schools (Hatcher, 2006) operating outside Local Authority control, without normative regulation, use of

the National Curriculum and other requirements seen in normal state maintained schools such as comprehensives. Also see ISC 33 above, 'Academy Schools and the Anti-Academies Alliance'.

- The Iraq War - as a consequence of the US invasion of Iraq and support by Tony Blair's government in 2003 and attempts by the New Labour administration to prevent an inquiry into the war (Herring & Robinson, 2014).

Of the four leadership contenders, at least three appear associated with the New Labour approach adopted by the Labour Party since the late 1990s. The New Labour era was closely aligned to the Neoliberal or "laissez faire" model of economics (Harvey, 2005) which places importance on market forces and a market-led approach to management of state infrastructure, services and regulation of industry.

To some extent, we could also suggest that New Labour also comprised a Neoconservative administration - i.e. a geo-political stance most commonly associated with alignment to international spending for militarisation and foreign/overseas interactions to expand or develop nationalist status, power or influence (Brown, 2003). This is particularly evident of New Labour due to support for the Iraq War of 2003 and the significant channelling of UK GDP into nuclear weapons research and military funding during this administration (Kettell, 2011).

Both Cooper and Burnham were ministers in the above New Labour administration(s), their voting records broadly reflect the government position under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Another leadership contender, Liz Kendall, has also frequently associated herself with the New Labour era and policies, in areas such as renewal of the Trident nuclear option, retention of Higher Education tuition fees and

academisation (the conversion of state schools into for-profit, de-regulated academies), Kendall has commented:

“I’m not going to waste time obsessing about school structures. If a school is providing a great education – whether it’s a local authority, academy or free school – we will back it.”

(Sparrow, 2015)

Corbyn’s parliamentary career has conversely reflected a more traditional social democratic approach, reflecting his Trades Union and pre-1997/New Labour origins within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

This outlook is evidenced by his consistent opposition to areas such as PFI, the academies project, NHS outsourcing and privatization, the Iraq War, attempts to ensure transparency of the war via a parliamentary inquiry and opposition to Higher Education tuition fees. Corbyn was also a Stop the War organiser in 2003 and opposes renewal of the £ multi-billion Trident nuclear system.

The UK Commons voting record of the four leadership contenders are as follows:

Liz Kendall:

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/24816/liz_kendall/leicester_west/votes

Yvette Cooper:

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/10131/yvette_cooper/normanton,_pontefract_and_castleford/votes

Andy Burnham:

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/10766/andy_burnham/leigh/votes

Jeremy Corbyn:

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/10133/jeremy_corbyn/islington_northern/votes

There has also been much discussion in recent times regarding negative comments directed toward Corbyn by senior Labour parliamentary figures, including comments by Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Neil Kinnock, Peter Mandelson, by the other leadership contenders and further prolific individuals from the New Labour era. These comments allude to Corbyn's potential to split the Labour Party, to ensure a landslide defeat in the 2020 general election and his leadership resulting in decades of Tory (Conservative) government (ostensibly due to him being unelectable as a consequence of his social democratic views and policy).

Many of these comments appear to ignore the movement of constituency support across the UK away from Neoliberal parties, as represented by the current Labour hierarchy, toward non-traditional progressive options at the ballot box, as seen in the landslide victory of the Scottish Nationalist Party in Scotland during the 2015 general election, leaving Labour with one Scottish MP.

In the weeks since the announcement of the Labour leadership election, Corbyn has outlined his vision for improved UK employment and business partnerships, the development of regional UK economic stimulus, support for small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) and investment in training and careers for young adults (JeremyforLabour.com, 2015). Conversely, it

remains to be seen what the policies of his three rivals presently plan in terms of economic policy.

Some of the most striking social policy aims outlined by Corbyn include a commitment to abolish Higher Education tuition fees and restore student maintenance grants, funded by an increased tax regime on the wealthy, and to return academy schools under Local Authority (LEA) control and normative regulation (Vaughan, 2015).

On the topic of austerity, Corbyn also stands in relative contrast to the remaining candidates, suggesting he would implement aggressive inward investment to encourage building works, including much needed social housing development and other programmes for UK business stimulus, whilst in comparison, the three remaining candidates appear to cite the current and previous Coalition agenda for welfare reduction, service liberalization and support for the austerity programme.

In summation, we can see that the Labour Leadership election - ending 10 September 2015 - offers the choice (for paying members or supporters of the Party) of either a social democratic candidate – namely Corbyn, offering a blend of meritocratic educational policy and investment in UK business infrastructure, or two relatively similar neoliberal candidates (Cooper and Burnham) closely aligned to the New Labour path, and a remaining candidate (Kendall) also clearly aligned to the policies of New Labour.

Some senior New Labour politicians have accused sections of the public of “entryism”, i.e. of left wing or other activists (such as Trades Unionists) joining the Labour Party, or paying a one-off £3 fee to become associate supporters – thus allowing them to vote in the contest.

However, the massive uptake of eligible voting in the lead up to this contest surely indicates the hope of the wider progressive UK

constituency for Corbyn's values and approach to politics. Unlike the other contenders, Corbyn's appeal is derived from direct activism within the Labour Party, from his anti-Nuclear and other participation in community movements of the Left over decades - rather than from packaged PR statesmanship as seen in Blairite politicians since the late 90s.

Corbyn's political message - of a return to genuine social democratic values, espousing meritocratic principles and the preservation of UK infrastructure – for schools, transport and Universities, stands in contrast to the hyper-liberalization and for-profit agenda of New Labour, as evidenced in the PFI outsourcing of schools and hospitals and mass closure/give-away of public equity to multinationals and charities.

It can also be seen that Corbyn offers a robust economic policy, recalling the Regional Development Agencies, HEI networks and other innovative partnerships which benefited local economies in previous decades, Corbyn has stated that this agenda is focused around communities and smaller businesses.

Corbyn's policies stand in contrast to the laissez faire approach of Blairite and New Labour politicians whose abdication from economic strategy and failure to implement SME lending after the recession of 2007 saw thousands of businesses made bankrupt, whilst directing billions of pounds into the stock market to protect the portfolios of the rich.

The aspirational policies of Corbyn stands in sharp contrast to the New Labour pursuit of power for its own sake, the questionable and undemocratic collusion with other reactionary parliamentary groups, and pursuit of Neoliberal technocratic solutions - shown to have dragged the UK toward greater child poverty, the proliferation of workfare and food-banks, lost opportunities for our young people, scandalous deprecation of social care and neglect of business and enterprise investment.

Corbyn offers the best hope for Labour to regain its values and re-assert its traditions of meritocracy, equality and social justice.

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Looking at the News

Martyn Lowe

Video News

Have you looked at either the Guardian newspaper or BBC News websites of late?

Do you like the way in which they have been redesigned?

Have you also noticed just how many of the news stories are not so much written, as come in the form of video news clip?

What's really noticeable is the way in which they have become much more user friendly for a generation which is used to watching rather than reading the news.

They have also become very much tailored to those who use mobile devices, but not so much for those who use PCs.

Neither are they ideally suited for those individuals who prefer reading, rather than watching the news.

Is it a sign of the time, dumbing down, or just the way a lot of people expect to receive their news? Maybe, but there is nothing new about this.

A short history Looking at the news

Not so long ago great events and historical moments were commemorated in painting, and then prints.

After that came photography and film.

This says nothing about radio news bullets, but that is another story.

On Film & as Photos

Do you remember seeing Pathe News? *1.

Or

Going to a News Cinemas?

Until recently there was one at Victoria Station.

Between 1910 & 1970 this was the only way in which most people would have been able to see news film.

With the development of cinema came mobile cinemas and film vans. *2.

The Peace Pledge Union has its own Film Van which used to show Pacifist films at County Fairs and other events. *3.

There was even a Cinema carriage on the Flying Scotsman between March 1926 and September 1939.

Yet that was still a period when newspapers had pages of nothing else but type, and very few photos to go with it.

Indeed the first tabloids were referred to as Picture Papers. These included the Daily Sketch, Daily Graphic, and Daily Mirror.

I can still remember being asked for a copy of a picture paper while working at Putney Library in the 1970s (If you think about it then this is still a very good way of describing many of the tabloids which are on sale right now).

This is turn heralded in the era of photo journals, with such titles as the Picture Post and Life magazine.

Of course this was also during the decades when everyone listened to the radio, and before the wide spread ownership of televisions.

Thus I must conclude that viewing or receiving news by film or video clips is nothing new.

Judgement

Yet what is becoming much more difficult for people to do is watch these news clip, and then make a real distinction between what is news & opinion.

Video & film pre-selects the facts, and edits what is left for one to see.

Video & film gives just a limited number of viewpoints.

Thus video & film should only ever be regarded as no more & no less than a summary of a very limited selection of facts or ideas.

The same might be said of photography, but at least one does get the chance to fully study the static images which one sees.

What really makes news

Over the last century many newspapers and news journals have increasingly blurred the distinction between news and comment.

There are also a lot of newspapers which only really concern themselves with actors, pop singers, 'sports personalities', or so called 'celebs'. This is not so much news, but an extension of the entertainment industry.

That is why I read 3 or 4 of the broadsheet newspapers a day, and make a particular effort to look at a wide range of statistical information.

Only then do I feel like it's possible to make an informed judgement upon any news story.

Though much of the real news I read comes in the form of emails, or emailed newsletters, and by looking at various campaigning websites.

Say what you want about social media, it is a good way of sharing news between campaigners, but that only works because of a few individuals who keep searching for more.

In summary

News video clips may have a place in helping to inform one about just what's going on in the world, but they should never be ones only news source.

Links:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathé_News
2. <http://www.vintagemobilecinema.co.uk/history>
3. <http://thebrotherhoodchurch.org/history.htm>

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Undercover An incomplete resource list

Martyn Lowe

Introduction

There are some subjects which can never be documented or explained, as the very nature of these subjects makes that impossible to achieve.

This is certainly the situation with the issue of Undercover Policing.

The Metropolitan police policy of never to deny or confirm had made that impossible to do so, as is the way they will hold back freedom of information requests: 'for operational reasons'.

Finding out about oneself

Under the Data Protection Act one is entitled to find out just what records the UK police hold on you. Just how you can do this detailed on the Guardian newspaper webpage: -

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/apr/11/domestic-extremist-police-databases>

Last year I applied for my record from the Metropolitan Police. I posted the application form out in August and got my record back two months later.

What I get was the following: -

'On Saturday 23th July ... a No Nuclear Trains Demonstration around the Olympic site at Stratford, London. At 1355 Hours Martin LOWE from Kick Nuclear was introduced and began a speech on boycotting EDF Energy.'

Plus a postage stamp sized colour photo of myself.

That's exactly 34 words.

To make this application cost me £10.00. So that works out at just over 29.4 pence a word.

Given just how long I've been politically active then the only song which could cover my reaction to this is - ' And the band played believe it if you can.'

Undercover

In the 1980s I knew and spent time with Bob Robinson.

It was in 2011 that I learnt that his real name is Dr Robert [Bob] Lambert, and that he had been an undercover cop with the pseudonym of Bob Robinson.

In October of that year I took part in an action which named him as such at a conference that was held in the TUC building.

Having done this we put out a press statement:-

Undercover police agent publicly outed at conference

<https://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2011/10/486877.html>

A couple of days later the story was headlined in the Guardian newspaper.

Progressive academic Bob Lambert is former police spy

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/oct/16/academic-bob-lambert-former-police-spy>

Since then a lot of information has emerged about his activities, and all of the other undercover police which have so far been exposed.

A lot of this can be found on the Guardian website under: -

Undercover, with Paul Lewis and Rob Evans

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/undercover-with-paul-lewis-and-rob-evans>

Much of what has been published in the paper has also appeared in their book about the subject.

Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police, Faber & Faber (June 25, 2013), ISBN-10: 0571302173 & ISBN-13: 978-0571302178

There is also a lot of background information on him to be found on the Channel 4 website.

<http://www.channel4.com/news/undercover-police-bob-lambert-exclusive>

Since being exposed as an undercover cop, Dr Robert Lambert has pursued his academic career, but not without a lot of criticism for doing so.

He is currently a Senior Lecturer at the John Grieve Policing Centre, London Metropolitan University, and at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) at the University of St. Andrews.

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences-and-humanities/people/surnames-k-to-m/robert-lambert/>

Not that he has been left alone to get on with his teaching. Here's why: -

ISLINGTON AGAINST POLICE SPIES is a campaign to Sack Bob Lambert – police spy, agent provocateur, exploiter of women.

<https://islingtonagainstpolicespies.wordpress.com/about-bob-lambert/>

There have also been calls for the removal of his MBE which was given to him for his 'services' to the Metropolitan Police Service.

<http://bristlingbadger.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/bob-lambert-mbe-vs-sir-fred-goodwin.html>

What is know and what needs to be know

Bob Lambert was not the only undercover cop to be publicly exposed. The most infamous of them is Mark Kennedy who was known as Mark Stone, and used the written pseudonym of Lumsk.

http://powerbase.info/index.php/Mark_Kennedy:_A_chronology_of_his_activities

There are currently a couple groups which are documenting the activities of these individuals - The Undercover Research Group which aims to profile all known undercover officers, and many more to come.

<http://undercoverresearch.net/>

&

- The Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance exists to help co-ordinate, publicise and support the quest for justice for people affected by political undercover police spying.

<http://campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com/>

Police Spies Out Of Lives

In December 2011 eight women launched legal action against the Metropolitan Police and ACPO [the Association of Chief Police Officers] for the harm caused by undercover officers deceiving them into long term intimate relationships.

Police Spies Out Of Lives is a support group for the women involved with this case.

<http://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/>

This group deserves all our support !!!

<http://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/donate/>

Company spies

Of course it is not just the police which operate spies.

The multinationals have also sent undercover private detectives in to campaigning groups and organisations.

There was one which operated in the CAAT [Campaign Against the Arms Trade] office.

While two separate private investigation companies infiltrated Greenpeace [London] and the information they found was used during the infamous Mclibel case.

The Spanner documentary film about this case is well worth viewing.

<http://www.spannerfilms.net/films/mclibel>

Spanner films is also working to produce UNDERCOVERS:- 'a five-season, 25-episode television drama series based on the incredible true story of the police spies who infiltrated British activist groups over the last 50 years... and the women who unwittingly had long-term relationships and even children with the spies.'

<http://www.spannerfilms.net/node/99945>

Further information on corporate spying is to be found in the following:-

Lubbers, Eveline. *Secret manoeuvres In the Dark. Corporate and Police Spying on Activists*. Pluto Press. 2012

See in particular:-

Chapter 4. McSpy: Case Study.

&

Secret Manoeuvres: <https://secretmanoeuvresinthedark.wordpress.com/>

Further information.

With just one exception all of the undercover officers we know about have been male.

The exception was Undercover Clown Cop: Lynn Watson.

You can see her in action on this very funny YouTube clip:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kg5OlyT4bFk>

Further information needed

What we don't know is if Lynn Watson was the only female undercover cop. I'm convinced that she was not.

We also have no information about any undercover police who were operating before Bob Lambert turned up with the cover name of Bob Robinson during the summer of 1984. Thus this is and must be a very incomplete resource list until we know much more about these Undercover police, or until both the British Home Office and Metropolitan Police come clear about exactly what went on.

In the meanwhile the whole process of digging up more information upon those undercover cops we know about will be a slow one, and is very

much going to be the result of gathering those various snippets of information which are held within the activist community.

Known and Not Known.

One of the most telling aspects of the activities of all the undercover cops is that they were around and very active for just a few short years. None of them came from the towns or areas in which they operated, and nobody ever got to meet their families or previous friends. Then they disappeared on some pretext or other, so that none of their activist friends knew what happened to them.

I can think of at least 3 individuals that I knew who fall into that pattern. That's why I have a very nasty suspicion that they were undercover. The problem is that I just can't prove it one way or the other.

One Last Consideration

Some so-called newspapers, such as the Daily Mail, regard what they might print on this issue as 'just another human interest story', and will take no consideration of anyone's right to privacy.

Yet the very personal nature of what some of these undercover cops did to various women, many of whom were not being targeted by the police, does need to be considered as confidential.

That's why those who work on exposing undercover cops are very sensitive about making sure not to mention or reveal anything which is of a personal confidential nature in what they publish.

There is a lot more that does need to be found out about just what these undercover cops got up to, but we should never forget the harm they have done.

Information for Social Change Number 35 Summer 2015

Using VPN for Infrastructure Problems and Academic Purposes

Paul Catherall

In my various Library and IT related roles over the years I have encountered situations where students or other clients I have worked with found it difficult to access the WWW or other Internet services such as email, sometimes due to their home ISP having network configuration issues such as a workplace firewall, or most often, due to being currently located in a region of the world where Internet infrastructure issues are common, for instance in North and East Africa, the Middle East and parts of SE Asia.

In these cases, it can be frustrating and expensive to locate a properly functional Internet access package; it can also be problematic when considering Internet latency or slowness due to poor systems in some of these regions.

The specific technical issues encountered by these users can include obstructions caused inadvertently, such as the use of common TCP/IP and other protocol related Port numbers assigned within routers – causing a conflict with Web services encountered, or deliberate blocking factors such as configuration to prevent certain protocols, encryption or services running, such as SSL encryption commonly used in the context of WWW content. These issues can impact the ability of students to access educational networks, learning environments, the library catalogue or database systems and other online services.

I have found use of VPN style access options is often essential for some of these users to overcome access issues. One of the most basic options in this regard is the use of the Opera Web browser (<http://opera.com>) with its "Off Road" or "Turbo" mode active. This Web browser provides a broadly similar experience to other major browsers such as Internet Explorer, Safari or Firefox, but when used in this configuration ensures content is compacted or optimised, making the browsing experience faster for users experiencing slow Internet provision; this browser has the additional outcome of overcoming some common infrastructure issues.

Another option is to use a commercial VPN client, this basically involves obtaining the client from a software company, then running the client before accessing the WWW or other Internet applications using normal software/ Web browser clients.

VPN applications are often used by companies and organisations with associated server or cloud based services. When a VPN client is used in this way this has the advantage of routing Internet traffic via the host server, thus also allowing authentication to occur when accessing remote secure services, Web pages or other content hosted by that company or organisation. The Citrix company provides this kind of application, many similar services are provided by companies operating online.

Another option for access of content via VPN is the use of Citrix's cloud based Web Applications, this is basically a commercial suite providing potential desktop applications, including Web browser software and other Internet related tools, such as FTP for file transfer. This package can provide an additional means of overcoming infrastructure issues in some cases.

Finally, another option is the use of WWW services such as the Tor Web browser (<https://www.torproject.org/>), this is a browser based on the Firefox browser, originally developed by Paul Syverson, Michael Reed and David Goldschlag within a US non-profit educational project during the 1990s. The Tor browser provides a form of VPN which is free and requires no associated server architecture on the part of the user, the browser can be downloaded, installed and used without any technical knowledge.

Given international trends toward increasing WWW restrictions or limitations on personal freedoms experienced in many parts of the world, and corresponding reliance on the WWW and social media such as Twitter and blogging for popular expression, the above tools have become a lifeline for many users in affected regions.

It is surely inevitable that the expansion of WWW usage in developing world regions and corresponding trends such as mobile device ownership will result in increasing tension between growing Internet usage and the access restrictions mentioned earlier.

The VPN tools outlined in this brief paper can offer solutions for some individuals, however, it should also be pointed out that use of these applications can be problematic or even illegal in some regions, so use or advocacy of VPN tools should be treated with caution where sanctions may be in place for circumventing or overcoming Internet restrictions.

Information for Social Change Number 35 Summer 2015

Walking in Cader Idris

Paul Catherall

Englynion (plural of Englyn) are an ancient Welsh verse-form, they are typically composed of any number of short three-line stanzas.

This poem was published in 'Foibles, Frolics and Phantasms: Illustrated Poems (1995- 2005)', ISBN: 1424113997. The poem was narrated by the author on BBC Radio Wales and other radio channels in 2008, see <http://www.draigweb.co.uk/draigweb/my-poetry/>

Walking in Cader Idris

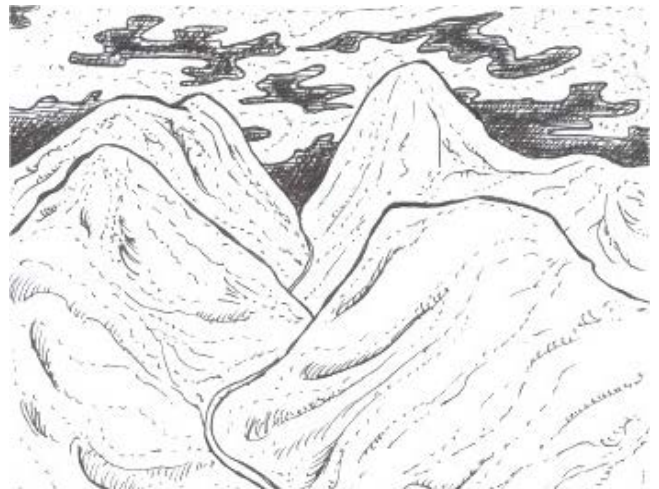
We started out in the dull morning,
Grey were the clouds over Tal-y-llyn –
Straight seemed the path from Minffordd.

The cwm rose, shrouded in haze –
A dispassionate giant,
Humbly we strode to its arms.

Ahead stretched meandering paths –
Forces of nature both seeding and fading
Appeared in each boulder and crevice.

Dauntless we clambered through scree-fall
Across rivers and hill-sides,
Like pilgrims with grim resolution.

Untouched and untamed down the ages,
Save by mild grazing cattle,
This landscape seems boundless and timeless.



Hard to recall in the silence of mists,
 Urban sounds, whir and frenzy –
 Other-worldly it seemed and ethereal.

The eye seems to glimpse apparitions,
 Is Llywelyn camped awaiting the Saeson?
 Does Pwyll seek his companions?

But the mists become kiosks and signage,
 As we leave not with memories –
 But with dreams wild and restless.

Notes

Cader Idris – More properly Cadair Idris (the chair or seat of Idris), part of a mountainous range in North West Wales possibly named after an ancient Welsh hero.

Minffordd – Meaning 'edge of the road'.

Tal-y-llyn – A 'llyn' or lake ('tal' signifies a lofty or high location).

Cwm – In Welsh a valley, but also a geological term for a formation in the shape of a cone with a depression in the centre.

Llywelyn – Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the last Prince of Wales – killed in a skirmish with English forces in 1282.

Saeson – In Welsh, a derivative of 'Saxon' specifically meaning 'Englishmen'.

Pwyll – A figure from the legendary tales 'Y Mabinogi' or 'The Mabinogion'.

Information for Social Change Number 34 Summer/Autumn 2014

Equality, Happiness and Wellbeing

John Pateman

Abstract

Searching for meaningful and measurable impact and outcome measures has become something of a Holy Grail for public libraries. The approach to date has been an attempt to replace quantitative statistical indicators with qualitative outcome measures. But maybe there is another way forward which can translate some of our traditional performance indices – visits, circulation, membership – into proximity measurements for much larger societal impacts and outcomes. This would eliminate the need for each public library to devise its own unique set of outcomes. Instead, all public libraries could focus on their individual contributions to big picture agendas which have a high local, provincial and national profile.

Creating meaningful impact and outcome measures can be challenging and it is often difficult to distinguish between cause and effect. For example, what, if any, is the relationship between library use, equality, happiness and well-being? And, if there is a relationship, do public libraries make people feel more equal, happier and improve their well-being; or are people who feel more equal, happier and who have a greater sense of well-being more likely to use the library? Library statistics such as visits, circulation and membership have traditionally been used to measure public library inputs and outputs. But these statistics could also be used to measure the library contribution to impacts and outcomes such as equality, happiness and well being. These metrics may indicate contribution, not attribution. In other words, they

measure whether the library is one of the causes of improvements in the lives of library users, not whether (or how much) the library is directly or solely responsible.

In this paper I explore some of these links between public library visits, circulation and membership, and equality, happiness and well being. I locate this exploration within a wider context framed by the ground breaking work of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (*The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone*). I use the wealth of evidence which they have collated and map it against public library data collected by David Fuegi and Martin Jennings (*International library statistics: trends and commentary*). I also consider some recent research in Canada (*The Canadian Index of Well-Being*) and the UK (*Quantifying and valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport*) which suggests that not only can an association be made between public libraries and well-being, but that this association can be measured and valued.

The ramifications of this relationship between library performance and social outcomes are both significant and far reaching. These associations can help us to re-position libraries, not just as providers of reading, information and learning, but also as important players in the solution of social and economic challenges.

Equality, Happiness and Well Being: evaluating public library impact and outcomes

Inequality has become a dominant concern and focus of public policy discourse at international, national, regional and local levels. With President Obama recently declaring inequality the 'defining challenge of our time', data shows that the world is becoming increasingly unequal with growing disparities between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots. In America income inequality is at historic levels and Stiglitz has warned that 'We are paying a high price for our growing and outsize

inequality...a weakened democracy, a diminished sense of fairness and justice...a questioning of our sense of identity.'

The \$26.7 billion of bonuses Wall Street banks paid out last year would be enough to more than double the pay of every one of America's one million full time minimum wage workers. According to a recent Oxfam report, the wealth of 85 global billionaires is equivalent to that of half the world's population – or 3.5 billion people. In Britain the five richest families own more wealth than the poorest 20% of the population – or 12.6 million people. Banting and Myles have argued that 'The redistributive state is fading in Canada... In the period between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s, the redistributive impact of the tax-transfer system was strongest in Canada, Denmark, Finland and Sweden. But by the period between the mid 1990s and the mid 2000s, Canada had joined Switzerland and the US as the countries with the smallest redistributive impact...Canadian society has become more unequal.' I have used Canada, Denmark, Finland and Sweden as my comparator group in this paper.

The *Canadian Index of Well-being* (CIW) emerged from the 2008 recession: 'From quarterly updates of Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) we know our country is slowly beginning to improve, but what does this mean for everyday Canadians? How are we *really* doing?' Asking these questions highlights the weakness in relying solely on GDP to measure how Canada is faring. GDP only tells us about our economic productivity, assuming that all growth is good when in fact spending on crime or natural disasters contributes to productivity. GDP tells us nothing about the people, environment, democracy or other aspects of life that matter to Canadians.'

In 2011 the first national report of the *Canadian Index of Well-being* was published. This report found that between 1994 and 2008, Canada showed robust economic growth, but increases in the well-being of Canadians were not nearly comparable. GDP has grown almost four times

more than overall well-being. The trends clearly show that even when times are good, overall well-being does not keep up with economic growth and when times are bad, the impact on our well-being is even harsher: 'As the gap between those at the top and those at the bottom continues to grow in Canada, it is important to recognise that societies with greater inequality are shown to have worse health and well-being outcomes. The evidence shows negative impacts are not just felt by those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, even the wealthiest suffer decreased health and well-being in societies that are unbalanced.'

One of the most detailed studies on inequality was carried out by Wilkinson and Pickett. They analysed a wide range of comparable data from 23 countries and found that almost everything is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is. Societies with a bigger gap between rich and poor are bad for everyone in them – including the well off. There is a startling correlation between income equality and a whole range of issues including happiness, physical health, mental health, drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage births and child well-being. For example, in more equal societies: people live longer, a smaller proportion of children die in infancy and self-rated health is better; children do better at school and there is more social mobility; communities are more cohesive and people trust each other more.

Wilkinson & Pickett focused on 23 developed countries which had comparable data on income inequality. These countries were then ranked in order of income inequality (measured by how much richer the richest 20% of people are than the poorest 20% in each country).

Table 1: Equality

Income gap (low to high)	/ 23
Finland	2
Sweden	4
Denmark	5
Canada	12

Table 1 indicates that Finland, Sweden and Denmark are among the top five most equal countries. Canada is in 12th place.

Fuegi & Jennings have analysed public library performance data taken from the LIBECON database of internationally comparable public library statistics. 21 of these countries were also studied by Wilson & Pickett.

Table 2: Library Visits

Library Visits (high to low)	/ 21
Finland	1
Denmark	3
Sweden	4
Canada	17

Table 2 indicates that Finland, Sweden and Denmark are among the top four highest performing countries in terms of library visits. Canada is in 17th place. This suggests that there may be a relationship between income equality and library visits, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Equality and Library Visits

	Equality	Visits
Finland	2	1
Sweden	4	4
Denmark	5	3
Canada	12	17

If public libraries are contributing to the creation of more equal societies, the challenge is to identify that contribution and evaluate it. If we can understand and measure the public library contribution we can make it a strategic priority and align our structures, systems and cultures with this priority. This will create a benefit to society by making it more equal, and a benefit to the library by increasing its use. Conversely, as levels of inequality increase, levels of library use tend to decrease. For example, in the UK income inequality has increased by 32% and library use has fallen by 16%.

Happiness

There is close link between equality and happiness. The people who live in more equal countries tend to be happier than the people who live in less equal countries. The research team who produced *The World Happiness Report* (UN, 2013) analysed data from 156 countries.

The participants were asked two sets of questions. The first probed their emotional state: Do you laugh a lot? Are you happy? Do you enjoy life? Do you worry? Are you sad? Are you angry? The second examined how they felt about their lot, their life and their prospects. Their answers were cross-referenced with their country's economic, social, political, environmental and religious profiles. What the researchers discovered was that six factors – per capita income, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, freedom from corruption, having someone to count on

in times of trouble, and personal generosity – accounted for three quarters of the variation in national happiness. The second point that jumped out of the data was that mental illness – a low priority for most governments – was the single most important cause of global unhappiness.

Table 4: Happiness

Happiness (high to low)	/ 156
Denmark	1
Sweden	5
Canada	6
Finland	7

Table 4 indicates that Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Canada are among the top seven most happy countries.

Table 5: Library Circulation

Circulation (high to low)	/ 32
Finland	1
Denmark	2
Canada	4
Sweden	5

Table 5 indicates that Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Canada are among the top five countries in terms of library circulation. This suggests that there may be a relationship between happiness and library circulation, as shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Happiness and Library Circulation

	Happine ss	Circulati on
Denmar k	1	2
Sweden	5	5
Canada	6	4
Finland	7	1

If public libraries are making people happier, the challenge is to identify that contribution and evaluate it. If we can understand and measure the public library contribution we can make happiness a strategic priority and boost our efforts to achieve this objective.

The *World Happiness Report* urged governments around the world to pay more attention to mental illness. Not only is it a cause of misery, it lowers productivity, reduces incomes, fractures relationships and prevents people from contributing to the wider community. Even in rich countries, two thirds of mental illness goes untreated. The report encouraged governments to listen to the public. There is a serious misalignment between what matters to citizens and what motivates policy makers. The report advised governments to not assume that cynicism is permanent. It fades when people see a way forward, see their government making headway and see their lives getting better. These are also valuable lessons for public libraries.

Well-being

There are many definitions of well-being. The *Canadian Index of Well-being* has adopted the following as its working definition: 'The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards; robust health;

a sustainable environment; vital communities; an educated populace; balanced time use; high levels of democratic participation; access to and participation in leisure and culture.

Participation in leisure and culture activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, contributes to the well-being of individuals, communities and societies. The myriad of activities and opportunities that we pursue and enjoy today all contribute to our overall life satisfaction and quality of life. They help to define our lives, the meaning we derive from them, and ultimately our well-being. This is true for all age groups and both genders. Participation in leisure and culture throughout one's life promotes higher levels of life satisfaction and well-being into later life. There is also emerging evidence that leisure and culture can play an even greater role in improving the quality of life for marginalised groups, such as lower income groups, children and older adults living with disabilities, and minority populations.'

The *Your Better Life Index* provides international comparisons of well-being (life satisfaction) across 36 OECD countries:

Table 7: Well-being

Well-being (high to low)	/ 36
Denmark	3
Canada	4
Sweden	7
Finland	9

Table 7 indicates that Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Canada are among the top nine countries in terms of well-being.

Measuring feelings can be very subjective, but is nonetheless a useful complement to more objective data when comparing quality of life across

countries. Subjective data can provide a personal evaluation of an individual's health, education, income, personal fulfillment and social conditions. Life satisfaction measures how people evaluate their life as a whole rather than their current feelings. It captures a reflective assessment of which life circumstances and conditions are important for subjective well-being.

Table 8: Library Membership

Membership (high to low)	/ 32
Finland	3
Denmark	4
Sweden	9
Canada	14

Table 8 indicates that Sweden, Denmark and Finland are among the top 9 countries in terms of library membership. Canada is in 14th place. This suggests that there may be a relationship between well-being and library membership, as shown in Table 9:

Table 9: Well-being and Library Membership

	Well-being	Members hip
Denmark	3	4
Canada	4	14
Sweden	7	9
Finland	9	3

If public libraries are improving well-being, the challenge is to identify that contribution and evaluate it. We already know that on average people who read have better physical health, empathy and mental health.

Frequent readers are more likely to be satisfied with life, happier and more successful. Reading for as little as six minutes can reduce stress by 60%, slow down the heart beat, ease muscle tension and alter your state of mind. Reading is also good for others. For example, readers are more likely to help non-profit organisations: 82% of readers donate goods or money (compared to 66% of non-readers); 42% of readers volunteer (compared to 25% of non-readers). But how do we measure this impact?

Impact

Reading between the lines: the benefits of reading for pleasure

(Billington, 2015) indicated the positive impact reading has on health and well being and how it reduces isolation. This research report explored the emotional, social and psychological benefits to adults of regular reading for pleasure. The key findings include: half of readers say that reading helps them sleep better; regular readers reported fewer feelings of stress and depression than non-readers, and stronger feelings of relaxation from reading than from watching TV or engaging with social media; reading creates a parallel world in which personal anxieties can recede, while also helping people to realise that the problems they experience are not theirs alone; a fifth of respondents said reading helped them to feel less lonely; readers have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with difficult situations. The report concluded that: readers feel happier about themselves and their lives; reading produces greater life satisfaction, enhances social connectedness and sense of community spirit; and helps protect against and even prepare for life difficulties.

Exploring the Longitudinal Relationship Between Arts Engagement and Health

(Gordon-Nesbit, 2015) reveals that engaging with the arts and culture generally has a positive long-term effect on health and wellbeing. This research has uncovered evidence, stretching back a number of

decades, which shows a significant association between engaging with the arts and longer lives better lived. Under the auspices of the Cultural Value Project Dr. Gordon-Nesbitt has compiled an evidence base comprised of fifteen longitudinal studies. These international studies collectively suggest that attending high-quality cultural events has a beneficial impact upon a range of chronic diseases over time. This includes cancer, heart disease, dementia and obesity, with an inevitable knock-on effect upon life expectancy.

Many possible reasons for this positive association are speculated upon by the researchers brought together in this report – from increased social capital to physical and psychological responses. One of the most compelling potential explanations for any positive association observed between arts engagement and health comes from the field of epigenetics, specifically the idea that environmental enrichment (in this case, cultural activity) can cause certain harmful genes to be switched off, enabling health-protective effects to be communicated from one generation to the next.

In an era in which arts organisations are repeatedly urged to account for themselves in economic terms and we have largely lost sight of the individual and social value of culture, it is hoped that these combined findings will be heeded by policy-makers in the arts and health. As several of the researchers included in the evidence base observe and Dr. Gordon-Nesbitt highlights in her report, there is every chance that any positive health effects attributed to arts engagement are the result of a hidden factor, most likely a socioeconomic one. As such, this compelling report urgently incites further research into the inequalities that mediate our access to health and the arts.

Speaking Volumes: the impact of public libraries on well being (Carnegie UK Trust, 2014) has identified four main ways in which public libraries can have a positive impact on well-being:

- Library as social hub - tackling isolation; promoting environmental awareness; connecting citizens; promoting health.
- Library as cultural centre - promoting literature; making music; art, dance and drama; creative spaces; local history resources; library as cinema.
- Library as learning hub – supporting literacy; digital literacy; lifelong learning; English language; early years and school age.
- Library as economic enabler – maximising income; access to employment; encouraging enterprise.

Another UK study, *Evidence Review of the Economic Contribution of Libraries* (Arts Council England, 2014), also considered the social impact of public libraries. Five key areas were identified: children and young people's education and personal development; adult education, skills and employability; health and well-being; community support and cohesion; digital inclusion. This report concludes that 'What the available evidence shows is that public libraries contribute to long term processes of human capital formation, the maintenance of mental and physical well-being, social inclusivity and the cohesion of communities.' But how do we value this value?

Value

Establishing the costs of public libraries is relatively straightforward, but calculating the benefits can be more challenging. So that we can demonstrate whether or not an intervention creates a net benefit, we would ideally like to express benefits in monetary units thus allowing direct comparison with costs. In standard cost-benefit analysis, monetary values are estimated by making inferences about people's willingness to pay from market data or from asking them directly for their willingness to pay in a contingent valuation study. So, if we wanted to value the use of public libraries, we would typically look for market data and / or we could

ask people hypothetical questions about their willingness to pay for particular activities and benefits.

A Spanish study used contingent valuation to estimate *The Economic and Social Value of Information Services: libraries – report of findings* (Yanez, 2014) to public library users (\$309 pa) and non-users (\$46 pa). A UK study has estimated the *Economic Value of Library Services* (Archives, Library and Museums Alliance, 2012) to be between \$43 and \$49 for each visit. That is between 5.5 and 7.5 times greater than the actual cost of provision. The study considered five measures of value: user investment, community benefits, cost of alternatives, employment effects and supply chain effects. *So Much More: the economic impact of the Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto* (TPL, 2013) was the first Canadian public library study to measure in concrete economic terms the Return on Investment for library service. For every dollar invested in TPL, Torontonians receive \$5.63. This benefit results from the market value of services delivered, or direct tangible benefits and the stimulus to Toronto's economy from direct spending and re-spending (indirect tangible benefits). The total direct benefit of being a library member has been estimated at \$502pa.

The methods used by these studies are not without their problems, however. Revealed preferences are often not available and, where they are, it is often questionable whether they capture the true impact on 'utility' of a good or service. One of the main problems is that our preferences are often ill-informed and influenced heavily by context and sometimes by irrelevant cues and framing. There is now an alternative approach to valuation which shows considerable promise and which is increasingly being used in the public policy context. The Well-being Valuation approach looks at the impact of a range of factors on subjective well-being (SWB). If we also gather data on income, we can look at the effect on SWB of a change in income alongside the effect of a library

intervention (or expected benefit from that intervention). In so doing, we are able to estimate the income required to bring about the same impact on SWB as the library intervention, thus enabling us to express the value of the intervention in monetary units. So, if we want to value library engagement, we can now look for the impact on subjective well-being that particular activities have and compare that to the impact from income. The derived values show the increase in income that would be required to result in the same well-being increase.

This methodology was used in a government sponsored study in the UK, *Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport* (Fujiwara, 2014), which identified the well-being impacts of cultural engagement and sport participation:

Table 10: Value

Activity	Value
Library engagement	\$2,446
Sport participation	\$2,028
Arts engagement	\$1,951

Table 10 indicates that a significant association was found between frequent library use and reported well-being. Using libraries frequently was valued at \$2,446 per person per year for library users, or \$203 per person per month. Sport participation was also found to be associated with higher well-being. This increase was valued at \$2,028 per person, per year, or \$169 per person per month. Arts engagement was also found to be associated with higher well-being. This was valued at \$1,951 per person per year, or \$162 per person per month.

The monetary well-being value is based on individuals' own perceived value to themselves of engagement rather than a wide value to society. This individual value (primary benefits) should be considered in light of the wider social impacts (secondary benefits) in order to provide a more holistic consideration of the full non-economic impacts of library engagement.

A follow on study considered *The Health and Well Being Benefits of Public Libraries* (Fujiwara, 2015) in terms of both primary and secondary benefits. This study had two key research aims:

- The value of engagement in library services in terms of the impact on people's overall quality of life. This represents the primary benefits of library services. Primary benefits are those that accrue directly to the individual (i.e. the impact on their wellbeing). This study looked at the value of services in libraries in England and how this value differs by service type and the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual. This study also looked at what factors drive the reported values, such as socio-demographic factors and aspects of service use.
- The value to society of the health benefits of library services. This study looked at the potential savings due to reductions in medical service usage as a result of improvements in general health from library service usage. This represents the secondary benefits of library services. They relate to impacts that benefit society more widely which at some point may be an indirect benefit to the individual as well. This mainly encompasses impacts on the economy and public purse. These are benefits because they could lead to reduced public spending on health which could lead to lower tax rates or shifts in resources to other important policy areas.

This study was based on a large online survey with 2,000 adult library visitors and non-visitors, where a visitor was defined as someone who had visited a public library in the past 12 months.

Table 11: Willingness to pay

Willingness To Pay	Value
Willingness to Pay – Active Library Users	\$35.11
Willingness to Pay – Non Users	\$18.55
National average WTP - Active Library Users	\$657.5 million
National average WTP - Non Users	£644.5 million
Combined annual WTP	\$1.3 billion

Table 11 indicates the primary benefits of library use. The average willingness to pay (WTP) to maintain current library services among library users in England was \$35.11 per year in increased council tax. As would be expected, non-users reported a lower WTP of \$18.55, which is around half that of the WTP values stated by library users. It is possible to aggregate use value across the library-using English population to estimate a national average WTP for library services of \$657.5 million per year. It is also possible to aggregate a value for non-users in the English population to estimate a national average non-use WTP for library services of £644.5 million per year. In total this provides a combined annual WTP for local library services of \$1.3 billion across library users and non-users in England.

Table 12: Benefits of activities

Activity	Value
People who use 'health services' at libraries	\$70.25
People who 'attend lectures and other events' at libraries	\$52.34
People who use their library as a 'space for socialising'	\$47.59

Table 12 indicates the primary benefits of particular activities. People who use 'health services' at libraries (\$70.25), 'attend lectures and other events' at libraries (\$52.34), and those who use their library as a 'space for socialising' (\$47.59) are willing to pay more than the average user to maintain services at their local library (WTP amounts in brackets).

The drivers of WTP were consistent with economic theory: socio-demographic characteristics such as higher education, frequent reading (i.e. interest in reading), having children and higher income are associated with higher levels of willingness to pay for library services. The study undertook some additional analysis to look at how different services impact on WTP. No association was found between library expenditure at the local authority level (which may be one indicator of the level and quality of local library services) and respondents' willingness to pay for library services. However, evidence was found that certain characteristics or aspects of library service provision, in particular good-quality customer service and community-centred services, increase the value that users place on their local libraries.

The health and subjective wellbeing data indicated that library use was positively associated with subjective wellbeing after controlling for a wide range of other factors. Library usage was associated with higher life satisfaction, higher happiness and a higher sense of purpose in life (although usage was also associated with higher levels of anxiety). These results suggest that libraries generally have an important role in library users' quality of life and wellbeing.

The study also found that library engagement had a positive association with general health. After controlling for other confounding factors, being a regular library user was associated with a 1.4 per cent increase in the likelihood of reporting good general health. This improvement in health was valued in terms of cost savings to the NHS.

Table 13: Health benefits

Activity	Value
Medical cost savings associated with library engagement	\$2.37
Aggregate NHS cost savings across the library-using English population	\$49.5 million

Table 13 indicates the secondary benefits of library use. Based on reductions in GP visits caused by this improvement in health, it was estimated the medical cost savings associated with library engagement at \$2.37 per person per year. It is possible to aggregate NHS cost savings across the library-using English population to estimate an average cost saving of \$49.5 million per year.

This is likely to represent just a subset of the secondary health benefits of libraries, which may impact upon other medical services and costs aside from GP visits. It is likely that there are other positive medical service usage impacts which may have quite small financial implications on a per person basis, but which may accumulate once cost savings across all library visitors over many years are added up. There are also likely to be other areas where the secondary benefits of local libraries may be felt, such as social care, education, skills training and employment.

Combining aggregate figures for the primary and secondary benefits at the national level gives a total value of \$1.3 billion per annum from local library services in England.

Participation

The *Canadian Index of Well-being* has tracked participation in leisure and cultural activities and identified a number of important trends: 'Leisure and culture make significant contributions to the well-being of Canadians and their communities. They also help shape our national identity and sense of who we are as people. Thus, the overall decline in the engagement of Canadians in such activities is of considerable concern.'

Table 14: Participation

Activity	Participation
Participation in social leisure activities	-19.7%
Participation in arts and culture activities	-8.5%
Volunteering in culture and recreation	-21.9%

Table 14 indicates that Canadians are spending 19.7% less time on social leisure activities and participation in arts and culture activities has declined by 8.5%. The decline in participation in both leisure and culture activities was greatest among women. Adults 65 years and older spent the highest proportion of time on leisure and culture activities, in part because they had more free time. Despite the fact that overall volunteering in Canada has increased, the percentage of volunteering time given specifically to culture and recreation organisations dropped dramatically by 21.9%. This decline is most pronounced among Canadians who are 25 to 34 years of age.

These trends do not bode well for the well-being of individuals, communities and society at large. The significant drop in leisure and culture activity among women (who account for the majority of public library users) is particularly noteworthy. Equally worrying is the general decline in support for public agencies and non profit and voluntary organisations responsible for leisure and culture. The *Canadian Index of Well-being* concludes that 'If these trends continue, the benefits associated with having leisure and culture as key components in the lifestyles of Canadians and in our communities will simply not be realized. We must strengthen our capacity to sustain and further develop meaningful venues and opportunities for leisure and culture.'

What do these trends mean for public libraries? Is participation in public libraries mirroring these trends in leisure and culture? We measure library participation in many different ways, but what are the trends within our three key performance indicators: visits, circulation and membership? If we can boost these measures, then this will strengthen our argument that libraries are making a contribution to outcomes such as greater equality, happiness and well-being. What are the trends in your Province and Public Library?

Ontario

How are Ontarians Really Doing? is the first provincial report to be produced by the *Canadian Index of Well-being*. It describes how the quality of life for Ontarians has shifted from 1994 to 2010, and how those shifts compare to all Canadians:

Table 15: Ontario

Domain	Ontario	Canada
GDP	+24.1%	+28.9%
Overall well-being	+7.3%	+7.5%
Leisure and culture	-5.9%	-7.8%

Table 15 indicates that, even though Ontario and Canada show very similar increases in overall well-being (+7.3% and +7.5%), both pale in comparison with GDP growth of almost 30% over the same time period.

The report notes that ‘The largest negative trend in Ontario, a 5.9% drop in leisure and culture, has Ontarians asking “where have all the good times gone?” While less severe than the national decline of -7.8% for all of Canada, the trend deserves attention. Ontarians, especially women, are socialising less and spending less time engaged in arts and culture. Overall, volunteering in arts and culture, attending performances, and spending are all down significantly in Ontario. Historically, people have

fiercely protected the time and money they spend on their free time pursuits. Seen across all income levels, this dip goes beyond belt tightening due to the recession. All these factors erode elements of health and community connection, and reduce the sense of who we are as people.'

Engagement

Table 16: Engagement

Activity	Ontario	Canada
Engagement in social leisure activities	-4.4%	-19.7%
Engagement in arts and cultural activities	-2.6%	-8.5%
Volunteering in leisure and culture	-19.6%	-21.9%

Table 16 indicates that, while participation in leisure and culture activities declined less in Ontario than the national average, there were still some significant reductions. Engagement in social leisure activities was down by 4.4% and participation in arts and cultural activities was 2.6% lower. The decline in participation in both leisure and culture activities was greatest among women; volunteering in leisure and culture activities declined by 19.6%. The report also suggests a number of 'ideas for positive change'. Some of these ideas are very relevant to public libraries.

Enhance access to public spaces, leisure and culture opportunities for all citizens: 'Our communities are the best places to build relationships and to rekindle participation in leisure and culture. Participation in culture, leisure and recreational activities is inevitably social in nature – it brings us into regular contact with others who share similar interests and values. These connections help to build social capital – trusting relationships, stronger ties to the community, and greater understanding of the diverse groups within the community. They also contribute to individual

enrichment, particularly among individuals who are marginalised or disadvantaged. We need to think beyond simply creating more activities and ensure that people are aware, feel included, and have the resources to participate.'

- Build community with a mosaic approach by creating many opportunities for informal interactions among diverse groups within the community
- Create or enhance safe and attractive public spaces where people can meet and interact, and where friendship and trust can grow through daily contact
- Maximise the use of the internet, mobile communications and other technologies to raise awareness, provide information, create forums for discussion and invite direct participation, particularly among youth
- Ensure that citizens feel welcome, understand how they can participate, have meaningful opportunities for input, and can see their input translated into action

By taking these approaches public libraries can increase access and widen their audience beyond the 40% of local communities who are regular or occasional library users. These are essential steps in *Developing Community-Led Public Libraries* (2013).

Focus on the community as a place for social innovation and change:

'Communities are the ideal place to build co-operation among stakeholders, to break down the silos between domains, and to experiment with social innovation. While broad public policy can be implemented at the national or provincial levels, the community level is where meeting compelling challenges head on and customising new ways to address them may have the most, and fastest, impact on our well being. Critically, the process of co-operation can also lead to social

change and help build community vitality. In this respect, the process is just as valuable as the outcomes.'

- Ensure new and redeveloped communities include integrated spaces where resident contacts and exchanges can occur
- Ensure all citizens, regardless of social or economic status, have access to opportunities for leisure and culture
- Support partnerships between community groups and public agencies that identify local needs and help provide access to leisure and culture opportunities, especially for marginalised groups who may be unfamiliar with programs and services
- Protect or restore funding for arts, culture and recreational programs

The ability to identify, prioritise and meet community needs is central to *Developing a Needs-Based Library Service* (2003).

Thunder Bay

As well as having an impact on national and provincial objectives and priorities, your public library can also contribute to local outcomes. For example, TBPL is a partner in *Thunder Bay Counts*. This new initiative will lead a coordinated response to determine and act on what is important for people's well-being, while addressing a range of social challenges. The community will have a shared responsibility in developing an action plan with desired outcomes that will help eliminate the root causes of some of the most pressing community priorities that create barriers to well being. *Thunder Bay Counts* will pull together, summarize and share existing information about important local social issues, as well as information about people's hopes and aspirations. From this information shared goals will be developed. It will partner with local organisations (including TBPL) to build on existing work and mobilise, measure and report on the progress of these and new efforts to address social issues

and realize shared goals. This approach emphasizes ongoing community engagement, and there will be regular reports and an interactive website that shares up to date information from a variety of sources about the status of shared goals, the action that is being taken, and the impact of that action.

The Thunder Bay Counts: Shared Goals Report identified a number of common issues and potential shared goals, including the following:

- Employment opportunities and economic equality – increase the proportion of young adults who transition successfully from school to work
- Community engagement – increase the proportion of local residents who feel a strong sense of connection to their community
- Access to recreation – increase the number and variety of low-cost, accessible recreational opportunities available to local residents
- Racism and cross-cultural understanding – improve collaboration between Aboriginal organisations and major city institutions

These goals are aligned with TBPL's strategic directions, particularly Support our Local Economy, Promote Diversity and Social Inclusion, and Foster Community Well-being and Personal Growth. By sharing data and resources with other partner members and by taking part in and leading on some of these initiatives, TBPL can demonstrate how it is contributing to the well-being of the Thunder Bay community.

Conclusion

More research is needed into the relationship between public library visits, circulation and membership and wider societal impacts and outcomes such as equality, happiness and well-being. There seems to be a statistical association between these issues but research is required to identify and isolate the public library contribution. Once this contribution has been identified it can be used to inform public library strategies,

structures, systems and culture. These impact measures can be used to calculate how public library inputs (resources) are translated into outputs (visits, circulation, membership) and outcomes (equality, happiness and well-being). This evidence will enable libraries to be re-positioned as key contributors to wider agendas which have political and financial support.

Canada continues to rank near the top of the world in indices which are designed to measure national advancement using metrics beyond simple economic wealth. The *Human Development Index* is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life (life expectancy), being knowledgeable (years of schooling) and having a decent standard of living (gross national income per capita). Canada was rated at the top of this index for much of the 1990's and has ranked in or near the top 10 since the index was created in 1990. Canada was ranked 8th in 2014. The *Social Progress Index* ranks 133 countries on a basket of 52 different indicators. Canada came in sixth overall as the most socially advanced country in the world - but was ranked first globally for offering its citizens what the report broadly terms 'opportunity', a group of indicators that include rights, freedoms, tolerance and access to higher education. High Canadian adult literacy rates and a very low homicide rate were also points of note. So what is the public library contribution to human development and social progress?

The *Canadian Index of Well Being* has noted that 'Canada, like most countries, is facing difficult challenges ahead. In these uncertain times, we are fortunate to live in a country where we have choices about how we want the future to look. The Index provides a broader depth of understanding that, when partnered with GDP, gives us the evidence needed to help steer Canada forward and build a society that responds to the call for greater fairness. The choices we make as a society will determine whether we face a distressed future or a better quality of life.'

Public libraries can help to achieve this mission of building a fairer society and giving people a better quality of life. By meeting individual and community needs the library can contribute to wider outcomes such as equality, happiness and well-being. These contributions can be measured by using proxy indicators – visits, circulation and membership– to determine the impact of public libraries on these outcomes. By understanding and evaluating these contributions, public libraries can demonstrate their role as agents of positive social change.

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Information for Social Change Number 34 Summer 2014

Liverpool Libraries Update and Appeal

Paul Catherall with thanks to Martin Ralph

Talks are on-going regarding the planned closure of libraries in the City of Liverpool, UK, following the plans of Liverpool Town Hall to transfer libraries to volunteer groups.

These measures reflect saving by Liverpool City Council after 11 libraries were threatened with closure in 2014.

In Spring 2015, seven libraries earmarked for closure were designated for transfer to voluntary organisations and charities.

Five initial Libraries marked for initial transfer to community or charity groups include:

1. Breck Road Library – for transfer to Alt Valley Community Trust..
2. Dovecot Library – for transfer to Alt Valley Community Trust.
3. Fazakerley Library – for transfer to Fazakerley Federation.
4. Kensington Library Kensington Library – for transfer to Kensington Fields Community Association and other related partners.
5. Walton Library Walton Library – for transfer to Mersey Care.

Alt Valley Community Trust have been running Croxteth Library from 2010.

Liverpool City Council has indicated its 2014-17 budget allocated by the UK Westminster government has resulted in a shortfall of £156m which has impacted the council's ability to operate the Libraries.

Library	Ward Population (Census 2011)	Current Customers Living in the Ward of the Library	Number of Hours Library is Open
Breck Road	13,555	1,439	28
Dovecot	13,336	1,448	28
Fazakerley	16,796	1,211	30
Kensington	14,619	1,677	30
Lee Valley	15,423	1,482	28
Old Swan	15,722	1,984	29
Sefton Park	19,237	1,957	28
Spellow	13,992	1,445	29
Walton	15,343	1,348	37.5
Wavertree	14,027	2,303	29
West Derby	15,886	1,839	31

Liverpool Libraries Appeal

If you live in the Liverpool area, please contact your local council to keep all public libraries open, council run, fully funded and fully staffed by qualified librarians.

Please ask your organisation to support these demands - as five council run libraries are facing outsourcing immediately (and a further two in the pipeline):

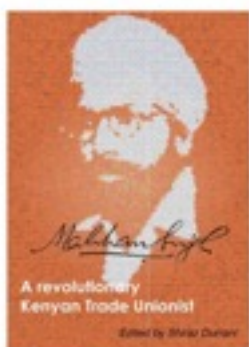
- 1) We/ I support the campaign to keep all public libraries open, council run, fully funded and fully staffed with professional, qualified, permanent and full time paid librarians.
- 2) We/ I support the community and union campaign and the actions such as: meetings, council protests (e.g. 8.30am 7 August Cabinet meeting 4.00pm 11 August Select Culture committee) and demonstrations.
- 3) We/ I oppose volunteer staff replacing paid library staff.
- 4) We/ I support the petition against outsourcing

Please also see Liverpool Against the Cuts:

<https://liverpoolagainstthecuts.wordpress.com/>

Makhan Singh: A Revolutionary Kenyan Trade Unionist.

Edited by Shiraz Durrani.



ISBN: 978-1-869886-22-6



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ADVANCE BOOK INFORMATION

This book examines the life and work of a remarkable trade unionist and revolutionary. Makhan Singh laid the foundation for radical trade unionism and influenced the liberation struggle in Kenya. He actively participated in the struggles of the working classes in India. For this, the colonial authorities in India and Kenya detained him for over 15 years. This collection, marking 101 years of Makhan Singh's birth, explores different aspects of his life as a father, a trade unionist, a political activist, a poet and a communist committed to social, political and economic liberation from colonialism and imperialism. His vision, his actions and his courage are as relevant today as they were in his time.

Makhan Singh suffered honestly for our Kenya's working class and independence... I know him as a fighter, every inch a fighter, a Kenyan nationalist of the highest order and a brother in trade unionism and in our national struggle for independence - Fred Kubai (1969).

The legacy of Makhan Singh points to the centrality of trade unions as one of the major epicentres of democracy... Singh was conscious of the fact that colonialism and crude capitalism were the key foundations for the privation of workers - Steve Ouma and Makau Mutua (2006).

During his detention, Makhan Singh was constantly visited by ... colonial agents who tried to pressurise him into agreeing to leave Kenya and be rewarded for it, or to recant and start working against the Kenyan workers' movement and progressive nationalism, with reward of course. He refused. - Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1996).

Kenya's trade union movement has always been a part of her national struggle for resisting British imperialist colonial rule, for winning national independence, for consolidating the indepen-

dence after winning it, and for bringing prosperity to the workers and people of Kenya – Makhan Singh (1969).

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OF INTEREST TO: Historians and students of resistance to colonialism and imperialism in India and Kenya; to trade unionists and political activists.

KEYWORDS: Makhan Singh; colonialism; Resistance to colonialism; Imperialism; Resistance to imperialism; India, history; Kenya, history; South Asian communities in Kenya. Communism. CPI; Ramgarhias; Punjabi in Kenya; Sikhs in Kenya.

